

History of the Family and the Farm

Frank and Eva Gurski purchased the dairy farm in 1918 from Warren Washburn for \$5,500. They had previously been tenants on the Joyce and Wildman farms in Brookfield.

In 1968, the Town of Brookfield purchased 80 acres of the farm located on the north side of Obtuse Hill Road from Eva Gurski for open space. Funds for the purchase were provided by an open space grant from the Department of Environmental Protection, private donations, and the town budget.

In 2002, the remaining acreage, homestead, and farm buildings were purchased by the town from Stanley Gurski and Frank Gurski, Jr.

Currently, buildings include the farmhouse, dairy barn, chicken coop, root cellar, blacksmith shop and other outbuildings. A tobacco barn, once located behind the blacksmith shop and next to the Merwin Brook Cemetery, was taken down years ago.

The Gurski homestead, a Victorian farmhouse, was constructed circa 1890 by Henry Foote. It has a gabled roof of asphalt shingles and a three-bay façade, with most of the windows of two-over-two sash. The open façade porch has turned posts and a simple balustrade. Its second story consists of wood floors and timbers from one of Brookfield's one-room schoolhouses. The second story was finished in May 1941 by Ben and Clarence Rippy, who were contractors in Brookfield.

The downstairs rooms consist of a kitchen with pantry, dining room, living room, and bedroom. The upstairs has three bedrooms and a bath. Electricity was re-installed in the homestead, and the mudroom entrance to the house was removed.

The blacksmith shop was moved to the farm from the Elsenboss Farm in the 1930s by Stanley and Frank Gurski, Jr. The weather vane on its roof was made by Frank Gurski. The Brookfield Museum and Historical Society now owns the blacksmith shop.

There have been several work sessions held to clean out the house, barn, and other outbuildings of debris and to salvage items of historical significance for future educational use. They have also cleared brush and debris from around the outside of buildings.

Fencing has been installed around the historic Merwin Brook Cemetery located on the property. It is the second oldest burial ground in Brookfield. At least 50 stones stood here at one time. Members of the Hawley, Merwin, Wheeler, Northrop, and Baldwin families are buried here.

Possible future uses for the property include tours of the barn, cemetery, root cellar and other buildings, farm-related demonstrations, and community gardens.

Article written by: By Jan Howard